

THE DISTURBING ELEMENT IN THE BODY POLITIC.

SPEECH OF HON. MARK TRAFTON,

OF MASSACHUSETTS,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

AUGUST 6, 1856.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union,

Mr. TRAFTON said :

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This is the American Congress, here assembled in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six. We are in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, a most significant phrase just at this time. Sir, what is the state of the Union? From the speeches delivered from time to time, by gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, we should infer that the last sands of our glass were just falling—that the Genius of History, in her winged car yonder, was now jotting down the last event, and noting the startling fact, “the Union is ended.” But, sir, I am not alarmed. I regret that gentlemen so frequently announce the fact that the Union will be dissolved in the event of the success (which I do not doubt) of the Republican party. Such threats and announcements only pain the patriotic heart, and weaken the bonds which bind us together.

But, sir, if the South wish to go out of the Union, all I have to say is, in Heaven’s name, let her go. We shall not drive her out—we shall not go after her—we shall not mourn her loss. But, sir, there is too much bluster to amount to anything. There will be no bloodshed, no dissolution of the Union. Agitation we must have, but it is not to be feared.

But what must strike a stranger as most singular is, that in all the speeches to which we have listened from the opposite side of the Hall, not one word has been heard in defence of Freedom, or denunciatory of oppression; not one word eulogistic of the Fathers of this country, or of that patriotism which glowed in their souls, or of the unparalleled sufferings by which they secured to us the blessings we enjoy.

Mr. Chairman, is not this strange? Can we account for such startling and mysterious phenomena? How is it that while upon every lip from that side of the House dwells the subject of human

Slavery—that nothing is heard but apologies for Slavery—and loud complaints of the North, for meddling with what, we are told, is “none of our business!” None of our business! Sir, is it nothing to us that four millions of our race are *chattelized*—sold upon the auction block, and knocked about from hand to hand, with no pity, no defence, no tongue to plead for them, no hand raised for their defence? Is it nothing to us that a system exists here which unsettles the foundation of our Government, deranges our entire policy, and makes us a hissing and by-word among all the nations of the earth? That perils our liberties, and threatens at last to wreck this entire fabric? Can gentlemen be sincere in such a declaration? Sir, there is no subject, however trivial, that has the most remote bearing upon the interests and destiny of our common country, but concerns each citizen, without regard to station or locality. No section of this wide land can suffer, but that suffering affects all, wherever dwelling. Our blessings are common blessings; so are our ills. We at the North sustain and bear more than our share of the expenses of the General Government—we are liable to be called upon for common defence—to be taxed, should it be necessary, to meet any deficiency in the expenses of Government. We must share the common dangers; and, sir, in the name of high Heaven, I ask if we are to be put down and silenced, when we believe we see elements of ruin at work among us, by the impertinent assertion, “It is none of your business?”

But, sir, it is our business—the business of every freeman, of each member of this Confederacy—not only to guard the Constitution, and to watch with Argus-eyed vigilance the public Treasury, but to protect the weak, to watch against the violation of the principles of justice, without which all government is powerless, and to promote that right-doing which alone exalts a nation.

There is such a thing as national virtue and

lth, and he is false to his trust as a legislator, and a traitor to humanity, who adopts that infamous maxim, "My country, right or wrong!" hold that a true and faithful legislator will be as jealous of the fair fame and high integrity of his country as that of his family, or of his own personal character. Sir, it is not possible that careless intellect, legislative tact and skill, can apply the loss of public justice and faith. We are, in our recent history, bitter proof that the most powerful intellect, the most profound knowledge of jurisprudence, the most intimate acquaintance with the science of political economy, and a familiarity with constitutional obligations and powers equal to household words, avail nothing, in the absence of those more important elements of moral power which exhibit themselves in a regard to, and defence of, the rights of the poor and down-trodden, and which secure the homage of the heart, and open the way to the confidence and affection of the masses. All that concerns humanity concerns us as individuals, and more especially those who stand here as the *law-makers* of twenty-six millions of human beings. We cannot throw off this responsibility, if we would. We will not be turned from our purpose by that taunting cry, "It is none of your business."

The great act of the age, the repeal of the Compromise of 1820, that breach of national faith which brings a blush to the cheek of every true American citizen, is our business. The opening of millions of square miles to the evil and curse of Slavery, is our business. The robbing of our children of their fair inheritance, is our business. And, sir, it is *our business* to thwart these treasonable purposes, to roll back this tide of woes, and restore again to the country the peace of which it has been robbed by these atrocious deeds; and I doubt not next November will show that the people will understand in its true sense that Apostolic precept, "Mind your own business!"

Sir, some years since, a celebrated French philosopher, observing that this globe was subject to considerable perturbations when in a certain part of its orbit, inferred the presence of some unknown disturbing body in that region. He turned his glass in that direction, and discovered a new planet.

Our body politic presents such phenomena. We are agitated—disturbed—unsettled. And yet, sir, I am not alarmed. I have faith in God—in an overruling Providence. Such agitations and shocks are incident to rapidly-growing bodies. Organic changes cannot take place without excitement. The human body never suffers so much as in its most rapid growth. We are passing through important changes—developing our resources, enlarging our borders, and increasing our powers and capabilities.

Sir, we shall not soon sink, I trust, into a dishonored grave. We have before us a long and glorious career—a work to accomplish in the earth, hardly yet commenced; and that hand that guided the Mayflower, and sustained the Pilgrims, will guide and sustain us.

Mr. Chairman, what is the cause of all this

agitation? It is *Slavery*—a system so opposed to all just notions of republicanism, so repugnant to all the sentiments of freedom in the human heart, so inconsistent with the great principles of Liberty for which the Fathers fought, that it is not even named in our *Constitution*—not provided for in that instrument, but only *suffered* to exist, as an evil which it was supposed would soon die out and come to an end.

But alas, sir, that dream of the sages and patriots of the olden time has not been realized, but, instead, it has become the settled policy of the South; and the principal occupation of large numbers of American citizens is the rearing of men, women, and children, for the market! Great God! has it come to this? That enlightened and civilized men—men who profess faith in one common Father, in Christian revelation, in the improbability and future elevation of humanity—so far forget their former condition and degradation, the benefits they have derived from civilization and Christianity, as to rear and sell in the market, to be driven off like cattle, worked down to their graves, men and women, *human* beings like themselves, sometimes their own offspring, for no earthly cause but because they had given them by their Creator a black skin! The question naturally arises, What right have their owners to *property* in man? Who gave you this right? What is the ground of this singular claim? Is it *creation*? No, sir; God made man, and says, "all souls are mine." Is it conquest? No; you have not been at war with Africa, and taken prisoners, who, by the laws of ancient warfare, have forfeited their freedom to you. Is it *purchase*? Who had authority to sell and convey to you a human being? Show a bill of sale from your Maker, and we will admit it to be authoritative—until that time, we demur.

No, sir; in the *eternal principles* of right, one man cannot own another, until authority is given by the Creator. And this, sir, brings me to notice the singular position taken by the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. STEPHENS.] The main ground for this arrogant assumption is the *inferiority of the race*. Do not lose sight of the *fact*, that he is an *interested* party who comes into court to decide this vital question. And what is this *white-skinned* race, which assumes to decide this matter? An *improved* man merely, not *angelic* by any means. He assumes his own superiority, and the inferiority of another, and then draws the grand conclusion, "this being is therefore bound to serve me for nothing—to bow, and cringe, and tremble."

But a few years back, and this interested witness and judge was an untutored savage, more rude and barbarous than those over whom he now swings his whip. I object, sir, to this decision, and appeal the cause to the court of universal humanity.

Mr. Chairman, again and again has the assertion been made on this floor, that the African is an inferior race; and the speakers have announced this with as much gusto as if a new principle in ethnology had been discovered. Sir, this is not new. We have heard this often from the vaunting Saxon. But we might pause here, and

file a caveat; it may well be doubted whether we, as a race, stand at the head of God's creation.

It is singular that a race so wanting in homogeneity, such a conglomerate of all the odds and ends of creation—a race, any individual of which might, if disposed to trace up his lineage, find himself run into the grossest barbarism, if not at the end of a string—that such a race should, in its pride and arrogance, put its foot upon the neck of a subdued race, crush out by a long process of most degrading and and destructive policy the last impulses of ambition and the last lingering light of hope, and then attempt to palliate his rank offence by the plea of inferiority! Is this humane? Is this the obligation of man to man? Is this fulfilling the royal law, "Bear ye one another's burdens," &c.? Why, sir, in this, if it be so, is found the strongest reason for the destruction of this accursed system. *Because they are inferior, weak, crushed, broken, friendless—because "on the part of the oppressor there is power, but they have no helper"—because they cannot, unaided, free themselves from this thralldom, and throw off these chains which have galled them for long years—because I say of all this, we should help them.*

But, Mr. Chairman, what kind of logic is this? The African race is inferior to the Saxon. Granted.—and what follows? *Slavery?* Will the honorable member from Georgia risk his reputation for clearness of perception and logical acumen upon such a proposition? Sir, there is a long reach from the major proposition to the conclusion here; and they come together just about as closely as the arithmetical proposition of which I once heard: "If ten yards of cotton cloth be equal to one gallon of molasses, how far is it from Cape Cod to the fourth of July?"

If this be a just and sufficient ground for enslaving the African, it is equally good for enslaving all other inferior races. Look at it. "The inferior race should be in subjection to the superior," says this convenient logic. But the Celt is inferior to the Saxon—ergo, the Celt should be the slave of the Saxon. And, sir, it is but recently that I heard the remark from one of these defenders of this nefarious system, that the best thing that could be done for the hordes of foreigners flocking to our shores, would be at once to enslave them! Yes, sir, let free men bear this in mind, that the slaveholders do not put the right of one man to own another upon the ground of color, but upon condition! The strong may enslave the weak! It is the principle at which we look—all that is wanting is the opportunity, and the man who fastens the chains upon the limbs of the black, will with equal readiness, when opportunity offers, fasten them upon the white man.

The gentleman's argument, then, proves too much, and consequently proves nothing. He may just as well enslave the Indian, the Hindoo, the Mongolian, the Tartar, as the African.

But I lay all these circumstances aside. I place before me two men—one by his Creator covered with a white skin, the other with a black. They are both men, present the peculiar attributes

and possess the traits of humanity. They both think, reason, perceive—have sensation, hope and fear—love and hate—smile and weep. A then I ask, in the name of God, who made all one blood, what right has one to *chattelize* a fellow, which does not inhere in the other? the gentleman over the way answer.

But, Mr. Chairman, a remarkable feature of present phase of this system is, that its apostles go to the Bible for its defence! To the Bible to support a system of oppression, robbery, wrong, which finds no parallel in Jewish, Greek, or Turkish slavery or servitude! A system of which a great man, a rare logician and finished scholar, who came to this country as a chaplain to one of the first Governors of Georgia, in 1732, has said, "it is the vilest ever saw the sun," "the sum of all villainies."

I was surprised and pained to see the member from Georgia [Mr. STEPHENS] hold up the Bible, and declare in substance that American Slavery rests for its authority upon that book. And then he quoted from the Old Testament permission given to the Jews to buy bondmen and women of the *heathen* round about them. But does this sustain American Slavery? Am I under a Theocracy? Does the gentleman say the ceremonial law of the old Jewish Theocracy to be authoritative? Does he submit to practice all the commandments and requisites of that code? But he says it sustains the principle. No, sir; I deny it. All that it does, all it he found to do, is to declare what a *Jew* thousands of years ago might or might not do. The regulations of the internal police of the Jewish Theocracy have no more to do with us and our moral obligations and duties one to another, than have the mysterious hieroglyphics which are the ancient sepulchres and pyramids of Egypt.

Again. The text he read says: "Ye may buy of the heathen," &c. Who, in the name of common sense, are we, who set ours up as the chosen of God—*elect, precious?* We but the offshoots and descendants of the people of whom the Jews were permitted to buy servants. Let the gentleman, let the bold defenders of Slavery on the opposite side of the House show us a rescript from the Almighty, giving them the authority to buy and sell men, and will bow to it.

Mr. Chairman, let me ask the erudite gentleman, Were those *black men* whom the Jews were permitted to buy? And if not, and no member of this Hall will affirm it, then I press upon the defenders of this system this point: You bound to throw off the mask, and boldly declare that a *white man or woman* may be as justly enslaved as a black man. Do this—let the Democratic party of the country insert this in their platform—that *might is right*, and the man has the *divine* right to buy and sell the man, *because* he is poor.

But the gentleman has pressed this matter far; and, while intending to fly a high and arrow, his deceitful bow has turned in his hand and himself received the wound.

The same book, the same rescript, per *polygamy*. The gentleman from Georgia

the Bible, and exclaims, "I hold my slaves under the authority of this book. Abraham held slaves—he was the Father of the Faithful—I follow his example." And the gentleman from Alabama smiles complacently, and mentally exclaims, "My constituents hold as many wives as they choose, on the same authority. Abraham held a plurality of wives—and he was the Father of the Faithful—we follow his example."

Sir, a greater than Abraham has said, "For the law and the prophets were (in authority) till John; since that time, the kingdom of God is preached." Let any man read the Sermon on the Mount, and then go and buy or sell a human being as a chattel. But the gentleman imagines he finds authority for this crime in a case which paraded before us with an air of perfect triumph. It is the case of the centurion who requested the Lord Jesus to heal his servant—a man of humility, of faith in the healing power of the Saviour. I am not worthy—I have under me soldiers—I say to my servant, (was he black?) do this, and he doeth it—and so thou canst send a word, instead of going thyself, and heal my servant." The gentleman says, "I have not found so great faith—not in Israel;" and it is inferred, from this confession, that *American Slavery* is not a sin, because this slaveholder had great faith! This, sir, we must say, is stretching logic rather too far.

It is not said, this man was a *Christian*—his moral character was not endorsed—only that he had faith in the power of Christ to do a miracle. Nor is it proved that he owned a slave—suppose he did, that he was a black, "woolly-headed fellow," as the gentleman was pleased to call him. He says, "Paul sent back a slave to his master." We answer, "not as a servant, but as a servant—as a brother beloved."

The Chairman, the attempt to prove chattel slavery in humanity, from the Bible, is a *libel* on its source. When we consider the peculiarities of the early times, the degradation of the people, the hardness of heart, and dullness of apprehension, we are not surprised "that for the hardness of their hearts" the Divine Author of the Bible should suffer some things to exist, which are utterly prohibited under a higher and more perfect dispensation, and in an advanced stage of humanity; and that a man then might practise with impunity, what now is branded as a crime.

But, even then, the institutions of the Jews were established as to promote tenderness of heart, and to call for the practice of the milder virtues which are the Christian character.

The strongest probability exists for believing that servitude of the Jewish age to be mostly voluntary. The heathen parent had the power to sell his child—prisoners taken in war might be sold as they, by the laws of nations, had forfeited their lives to the conqueror. Jews might sell their own services: but, by a provision in the law, at the end of seven years they went out free. How carefully was harsh and cruel treatment of servants guarded against by that statute which forbade the rendition of the fugitive servant to his master! Sir, the code of Moses was disgraced by a *Fugitive Slave Law*. It was

left for the great American Republic to devise this flagrant violation of all principles, justice, and humanity. "Thou shalt not return the servant again to his master, that hath escaped unto thee; but in the place where he chooseth, there shall he dwell by thee."

Now, sir, we are told that this referred to *heathen* slaves, escaping from their servitude to the Jewish people; and as by such escape they were brought into contact with the truth, they should not be sent back. Sir, this is simply ridiculous. Why, what international law of comity existed between the Jews and heathen, that rendered such an interdiction necessary? None at all. The nations filling all that land of the Covenant were doomed to death, and a Jew would never have dreamed of returning a fugitive, nor would one have attempted to find sanctuary among them. No, sir; this rigid regulation was intended to prevent harshness and cruelty on the part of Jewish masters, and sustains the idea of voluntary servitude among them.

Sir, I come now for a moment to notice the most extraordinary and astounding defence of Slavery to which it has ever been my lot to listen. I have heard, sir, of a great many things being done on Christian principles. I have seen proposals to teach dancing on *Christian* principles, and heard of a man who threatened to wring another's nasal organ to the "glory of God;" but all this is thrown into the shade by the defence of Slavery set up by the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. FOSTER,] on the plea of getting them to *heaven*! Sir, how pathetically he described the death-bed of the *pious slave*, how earnestly he wished some of us were there to see, or at least that we would read a "little book" he wot of.

Why, sir, was the gentleman serious? Sir, an Uncle Tom may die happily in the dog-house of a patriarchal Legree, and die, too, of blows received from a savage master. But what does that prove? That Slavery is divine? No, sir; but that the Gospel is more potent than chains. These triumphant deaths are not *because* of Slavery, but in spite of it—just as some sick people recover, in spite of both doctors and disease. What a spectacle is here presented—a company of men banded together to sustain a system of *Slavery* for gain, really and ostensibly—forbidding under severest penalties the teaching slaves to read the word of God; and then, when some devoted missionary has found these neglected and wronged beings, and preached to them the word of life, and they die, shouting out their hopes of eternal glory, their masters turn round and piously thank God that they have been the *humble instruments* of bringing their slaves from darkness to light, and landing them safely in heaven.

But, sir, I have been taught to believe that the Gospel was intended to do something more for men than to secure a happy death-bed; that it secures "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It is a rule of life for all men, in all conditions. Read the teachings of the great Master, and mark how constantly and earnestly he insists upon the practice of the social virtues; how he exalts and honors the relations of life; how carefully he guards the

rights of the poor, and how sternly he reproves the oppressor; how he sanctifies the claims of humanity, making them equal to the claims of God. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath nought against thee, leave there thy gift. First be reconciled to thy brother; then come, and offer thy gift." Could he who taught thus, sanction human chattelship? It is preposterous.

But a greater wonder still is, that this plan had not been thought of by the Great Author of the Gospel at an earlier day.

Then, instead of the command, "Go ye into all the world," &c., it would have been, "Go and catch all the heathen you can, and bring them to Jerusalem, and give them the Gospel." Admirable scheme! In this way, what a vast amount of personal suffering might have been avoided—how many missionaries' lives would have been saved!

Fat and easy-living priests would have been permitted to sit quietly in their closets, and, bringing the heathen world before them, apply to them a motive six feet long, with a *snapper* on the end of it, to move them to say their prayers! Sublime ideal! Heaven to be reached through the horrible middle passage, and a plantation life of five years!

Sir, fancy yourself on the Gaboon river, in Africa, and a notice in the shape of a large hand-bill strikes your eye:

"*To Heaven with Despatch.*—The fast-sailing Baltimore clipper Swiftfoot will sail as above, direct for the better land, via the *Model Republic*. Rates of passage, *five years* on a cotton plantation, and then the passenger will be sent shouting home to Heaven."

Sir, see now your missionaries, under this scheme. They sally out at midnight, surround some quiet Kraal, raise a shout that startles hell almost, fire the huts; and as the frightened wretches rush out, they are seized, bound, hurried on ship-board, and stowed in the suffocating hold, in a height of eighteen inches and a space a foot square. The old and infirm are butchered on the spot, and left to the "uncovenanted mercies of God!" The remainder are hurried across the ocean. Morning by morning, the hatches are opened, and a half dozen or more suffocated creatures are pitched overboard to the sharks. Unhappy men, who failed of reaching this happy land, and of receiving the godly teachings of these Southern patriarchs! Sir, the picture is too horrible! As I live, sir, I would rather run my chance of heaven in the darkness and degradation of that benighted land, than to pass this terrible ordeal.

But, sir, here again the argument goes too far, and consequences follow, which I doubt if even these gentlemen are prepared to endorse. If the benefits arising from Slavery are so immense, then is it our duty at once to reopen the *slave trade*; and we are coming to this. Already some Southern papers are advocating this policy; and as sure as the free territories are not shut and sealed against this system of wrong and outrage, so sure will the example set by New York be followed by other seaports, and thousands of

Africans will be imported to our shores. Our navy, commanded by Southern men mainly, would be powerless, as it has ever been, for the suppression of this evil.

But, sir, this terrible result must be prevented at all hazards. *Resistance* to the further extension of Slavery must be our motto, our watchword, and the great issue in the coming contest. And in doing this, we encroach upon no rights; we inflict wrong upon none. We were asked yesterday, by the gentleman from Kentucky, [Mr. MARSHALL,] if Southern men have not the right to take their property into the free territory of the United States? I answer, that depends upon what that property is. As a Southern man, he has the same right to the occupancy of free territory as myself; but he has only the right to occupy it for the purposes of Freedom, and as a free man. He must keep within the charter, and that secures "to ourselves and to our posterity the blessings of Liberty." Slavery is repugnant to the Constitution—not once named therein; and it cannot be that the *Fathers* could ever have intended the nationalization of a system which they were ashamed to name in the great charter of Freedom.

Now, sir, we protest against the introduction of Slavery into the Territories, not only because the Constitution does not provide for it, but because it is plainly *unconstitutional*. Sir, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. STEPHENS] was pleased, some time since, to lay down the axiom, "That what is unjust is unconstitutional." I agree with him. Our constitutional provisions and guarantees are supposed to be founded in the principles of *justice*; if not so, then are they a nullity.

Well, sir, it is *unjust* to deprive any citizen of his rights.

To exclude him from the common domain of the country, would be to deprive him of his rights; and, therefore, such an act would be unconstitutional.

But when *Slavery* is introduced into any portion of territory, and becomes an institution there, it excludes the *free citizen*; and, therefore, its introduction is unconstitutional. We say to our Southern brethren, Go into the Territories—but go as we go—go as freemen, with free principles and free institutions, and we can live and labor together. But when you take with you that which is property only by *local laws*, which is an offence to freemen, with the product of which free labor cannot compete, you deny me what is my constitutional right, and exclude me from soil consecrated to Freedom by the blood of the patriots of the Revolution.

I will call attention to the following statistics relative to the comparative cost of slave and free labor, to show the palpable injustice of the introduction of Slavery into free territory:

"In an essay upon Manufactures in the South and West, Mr. TAYLOR, of Missouri, says:

"Without entering into a comparison of the present nominal price of labor in this and other countries, it is sufficient to say that, whatever the price may be, none can produce any given article as cheap with hired labor, as he who owns it himself. In the latter case the laborer has so much capital in hand, and it is not so much a question

with the owner, whether he can produce a yard of cloth or any other given article, as law as it can be produced in England, or in Massachusetts, but whether, by applying his labor to the production of the cloth or other article, he can make it more profitable than he can by using it in agriculture. It matters nothing to him, how others can produce the article: *he can produce it better still, so long as it is the best use that he can make of his labor, and so long as his labor is worth keeping.* It is upon this principle that the South-west is destined to monopolize the manufacture of the whole cotton crop of the United States?

"The slave-owner and the free laborer, so far as they are engaged in producing the same articles, being direct competitors with each other, and the power of the slave owner to sustain this competition being regulated and measured by the rate at which his slaves can be maintained in a condition of efficiency, it becomes important to have clear and exact ideas as to what this rate actually is. No question can be more interesting than that of the true cost of a species of labor, which does now actually control the condition of the non-property-holding whites of the South, and which may hereafter regulate the wages of the workmen of the North and West.

"In De Bow's *Industrial Resources of the South and West*, volume 1, page 150, will be found an estimate by 'a practical cotton planter of Louisiana' of the following items of expense, on a cotton plantation with 100 slaves: Medicines, Doctor's bills, &c. - - - - - \$250.00

To clothe 100 slaves, shoe them, furnish bedding, sacks for gathering corn, &c. - - - - - 750.00

"A writer in the *Carolinian* newspaper, quoted in the same work of De Bow, vol. 1, page 161, gives the following statement of certain items of expense, on a plantation with forty slaves:

Medicine and medical attendance	- - - - -	\$30.00
Blankets, 30 in number, at \$1.25 each	- - - - -	37.75
Shoes, 25 pairs, at \$1.25 per pair	- - - - -	31.25
Cotton muslins, 300 yards, at 8 cents per yard	- - - - -	24.00
Salt, 6 sacks, at \$2 each	- - - - -	12.00
Sugar and coffee for sick, 75 lbs., at 10 cents per lb.	- - - - -	7.50

"It is stated, in reference to this plantation, that *'the winter but not summer clothing was manufactured at the place.'* There are no other items in the account, of expense incurred in feeding or clothing the slaves. The items put down amount to \$134.25, being \$3.46 to each slave.

"Solon Robinson, quoted in the same work of De Bow, gives the following items of the expense of supporting 254 slaves, independent of the food raised by themselves, on Colonel Williams's plantation, Society Hill, S. C.:

Medical attendance, \$1.25 per head	- - - - -	\$317.50
Two hundred pairs of shoes	- - - - -	175.00
Annual supply of lard	- - - - -	100.00
Bill of cotton and woollen cloth	- - - - -	\$10.00
One hundred cotton comforters, in lieu of bed blankets	- - - - -	125.00
One hundred oil-cloth capotes (New York cost)	- - - - -	57.50
Calico dress and handkerchief for each woman and girl, (extra of the clothing)	- - - - -	\$2.00
Christmas presents, given in lieu of 'negro crop'	- - - - -	175.00
Fifty sacks of salt	- - - - -	30.00
Four hundred gallons of molasses	- - - - -	100.00
Three kegs of tobacco, \$50; 2 bbls. flour, \$10	- - - - -	70.00

\$9,122.00

This makes an average of \$3.55 to each slave.

"Mr. Robinson gives also the following items of expense on the plantation of Robert Montague, Esq., of Alabama, with 120 slaves:

Medical bill, average, not exceeding	- - - - -	\$40.00
Blankets, hats, and shoes, (other clothing all home-made)	- - - - -	250.00

"A *'Mississippi planter'* (*Industrial Resources*, volume 2, page 331) says:

"I allow for each hand that works out, four pounds of clear meat and one peck of meal per week."

"Another writer on the *'Management of Negroes.'* (*Ind. Resources*, vol. 2, page 331,) says:

"What is sufficient food? For, as there is a difference in practice, there must be also in opinion, among owners. The most common practice is to allow each hand that labors, whether man, woman, or child, (for a boy or girl ten years old or over, who is healthy and growing rapidly, will eat quite as much as a full grown man or woman,) three and a half pounds of bacon in a morning, or four pounds

if shoulder, per week, and bread at will; or, if allowed meat in this also, a peck of meal is usually thought sufficient. With plenty of vegetables, this allowance is quite sufficient; but if confined to meat and bread, negroes will work hard will eat a peck and a half of meal per week."

"A *'Small Farmer'* (*Industrial Resources*, vol. 2, page 333) says:

"I think four pounds of clear meat (per week) is too much. I have negroes here that have had only half a pound (per day) each, for twenty years, and they did far to outlive their master."

"A *'Virginian'*, from Matthews county, has furnished estimates for the *Albany Cultivator*, which I find quoted in the *Review for the South and West*, vol. 3, page 271. He estimates clothing and taxes for twenty field hands, men, women, and boys, at ten dollars, and their food at twenty dollars each, per annum.

"In an address, delivered before the South Carolina Institute, in 1850, Governor Hammond says:—

"Our Northern brethren have one, to mention only one, fatal and ominous disqualification for carrying out a contest (with Great Britain, for manufacturing supremacy) to extremes. With them, owing to their social and political condition, the tendency of wages is constantly to rise. If they are lowered much, or lowered long, the security of property is at an end. They can substitute no labor for that which is virtually entitled to salariness; and their governments, controlled by those who live by wages, have no power to protect capital against the demands of labor, however unjust. In the South, it is wholly different. * * * The great item of cost in manufacturing, next to the raw material, is that of labor. And the final result of the great struggle for the control and enjoyment of the most important industrial pursuit of the world, will probably depend on its comparative cheapness. * * * In England, factory labor is now limited by law to sixty hours a week. In our Northern States, the average of available weekly labor is estimated at seventy-three and a half hours. * * * The steady heat of our summers is not so prostrating as the short but frequent bursts of Northern summers. If driven to that necessity, there is no doubt we can extend our hours of labor beyond any of our rivals. The necessary expenses of the Southern laborer are not near so great as those of one in Northern latitudes. Corn, and bread, and bacon, as much as the epicure may savor at them, with fresh meat only occasionally, and a moderate use of garden vegetables, will, in this region at least, give to the laborer greater strength of muscle and constitution, enable him to undergo more fatigue, and insure him longer life and more enjoyment of it, than any other diet. And these, indeed, with coffee, constitute the habitual food of the great body of the Southern people. Thirteen bushels of corn, worth now, even in the Atlantic Southern States, only about \$6 on the average, and one hundred and sixty pounds of bacon, or its equivalent, worth about \$9, is an ample yearly allowance for a grown person. Garden vegetables bear no price except in cities. If sugar and coffee be added, \$15, or, at most, \$19, will cover the whole necessary annual cost of a full supply of wholesome and palatable food, purchased in the market."

Let the free laborer of the North look at these statistics, and then answer the question, "Can free and slave labor exist together upon terms of equality?" You go into free territory, and you find help costs you from two to three hundred dollars per annum, a hand; a slaveholder settles by you, and his help costs him not over fifty dollars. He has vastly the advantage over you. Free labor must, under these circumstances, sink before slave labor.

But this is not a matter of dollars and cents merely. It is infinitely more; it affects the character and social position of the free laborer. We believe in the dignity of labor. We have been taught, from early childhood, that not only was honest toil honorable and ennobling, but that it is mean and contemptible to live in idleness, and draw our support from the unrequited toil of others. The poor free people of the South feel insulted, if asked to labor. Said a Southern gentleman to me, recently, "The poor white population of the South are the most bitter

opponents of Abolitionism. They think it a fine thing to have the niggers to labor for them, and feel disgraced if forced to toil."

So it is. Wherever Slavery goes, the dignity of labor sinks, and the toiling freeman is put upon the same level with the degraded slave; so that the introduction of Slavery into free territory is actually the expulsion of free labor.

Mr. Chairman, here we plant ourselves; our determination is formed, and cannot be shaken. To the last, we shall oppose the extension of this gigantic evil. Fighting this battle, we are fighting for *humanity's* dearest interests. Sir, I regret this excitement, and deplore the sufferings which this great contest produces; but it must be so—it has ever been so. The Anti-Slavery enterprise, the crowning glory of this age, now in the ascendant, was, in its incipency, a by-word and a hissing. Men whispered in the ear, in closets, what is now thundered from the house-tops and in Senate Chambers. Our safety is in this contest. I do not fear the shock. Let it come, sir, when and how it may, we are safe, for we are contending for right, and we shall triumph. We have arrayed on our side, Truth, Virtue, Freedom, and the eternal principles of Justice. To all these we appeal—we appeal to God. All other questions sink, in this great *moral struggle*. We shall keep this steadily before us. Hope not, sir, for the perpetuity of civil liberty, when the wrongs of the poor and defenceless are disregarded, and banks and tariffs, and the extension of public domain, crowd out the greater ideas of justice, right, and the vital interests of humanity.

Sir, if it be demanded of a Christian man, in his social relations, that he exhibit and exemplify the principles of the religion he professes—that he should regard the claims of *justice*, and obey the dictates of law—that he should "do unto others as he would have them do unto him"—that he should abstain from robbery, and be guiltless of oppression—should it not also be demanded of a Government, based upon Christianity in its statutory regulations and constitutional obligations, that in its intercourse with other nations, and its treatment of its own subjects, it should be guided by the same principles and governed by the same rule? Can a Government prosper by arts and policy which would disgrace and ruin an individual? Are duplicity and fraud less criminal, when practiced by one hundred men, than by one? Do private villany and deceit, when extended to the body politic, become so diluted as to be lost sight of, or changed into virtues by the magic words, "reasons of State?" Is coveting a neighbor's field a sin by the decalogue, and the fraudulent and forcible seizing of the territory of a neighbor, for the purpose of extending the area of Slavery, to be palliated by the diabolic sophism, we are following "manifest destiny?"

Is a man to be held to a rigid personal accountability for his individual acts, and the deeds of this Administration be passed by, and the guilt lie at no man's door?

Shall the false policy, the deeds of blood which might have been prevented, the wrongs and outrages of suffering Kansas, be palliated by

the jejune plea, that no man is responsible for these things?

"Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer Without our special wonder?"

"Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer cloud, Without our special wonder?"

Yet such things are, and we present the astounding anomaly to the eyes of the world, of a nation professing Christianity, yet without *conscience* or *faith*.

But, Mr. Chairman, some persons must be responsible for all this; and though injustice is embodied in so-called *law*, and the breach of the national faith by which the barrier to the extension of Slavery was thrown down was a national act, yet the guilt of this must lie at the door of each *elector*. The law-making body is the aggregate of the masses of the people, and therefore the responsibility rests upon each individual. Each elector is there, and consents to the damning deed, if he does not exert himself to the utmost of his power to correct the evil.

Sir, the people are aroused. The blood of martyred men—the smoke of sacked cities on the plains of Kansas, like startling cries at midnight—the bloody bludgeon which struck down a United States Senator in his seat, like the fiery cross of the Covenanters, is seen on every hill-top through all the North, and, flying over the broad prairies of the West, calls the people to the rescue. And they will come by hundreds of thousands, and the coming struggle will show that the spirit of Liberty still glows in American bosoms.

Mr. Chairman, the peculiar position of the affairs of this country renders it impossible to present more than a single issue before the people in the coming struggle. *Slavery* or *Freedom* will be the cry. And we deny that this great movement for Freedom is, in any true sense, a geographical or sectional movement. If Freedom is sectional, and not national; if the Declaration of Independence is a sectional, and not a national document; if the heroic struggles and glorious achievements of the patriots of the Revolution were sectional, and not national; if their world-wide fame and well-merited honor are sectional—then is the present movement a sectional, and not a national enterprise. But, sir, the charge of sectionalism comes with an ill grace from that party, whose entire intent and ceaseless effort is directed to the support and spread of an institution obviously sectional in its character, and painfully repugnant to the moral sense of nineteen out of twenty-six millions of the people of these United States, and whose prevalence would ring the knell of American Liberty, in tones which would fill with dismay the oppressed millions of the human race in other lands! For we think we have demonstrated, above, that the principle of Slavery—its entire *animus*—is not the enthrallment of the *black man*, but of the poor and toiling classes, of all hues, and in all places. The whole tendency of the system is to perpetuate an aristocracy of *money*, just as dangerous and oppressive as that of blood and birth. The doctrine of the degenerate Democratic party is fully expounded by that embodiment of its platform—the present candidate of that party—who has

said, "Fifty cents a day is enough for any laboring man." Such a charge sounds strangely, coming from a party whose entire policy is dictated and determined by three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders in the South, whose feet are not only planted upon the necks of the millions of slaves found there, but also upon those of the free whites among them!

These men have always assumed to lead in matters of Government. They fill the offices in the gift of the people, and contrive to monopolize the patronage of Government. They swing the whip with equal zeal over the heads of bond and free. And now, when the people are aroused, and bent on bringing back the Government to its primitive principles, and restore its Republi-

can status, they howl out their cries of "*Sectionalism*." But little will the aroused freemen of the North heed such windy charges; but united—sternly determined—they will hurl this usurper from its seat, and with loud acclaim hail the second instauration of Freedom and Equal Rights!

"Then violence shall no more lift the sword,
Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears;
Then, he that fills an office shall esteem
The occasion it presents of doing good.
More than the perquisite; then law shall speak
Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts,
And equity—not jealous more to guard
A worthless form, than to decide the right;
Then fashion shall not sanctify abuse.
Nor smooth good-breeding supplemental grace,
With bare performance, ape the work of love."

WASHINGTON, D. C.

BUELL & BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.

1856.